

# IN OUR BACKYARD



AN UPDATE FROM THE ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

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## NRBC Hearings on Proposed Policy Change

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRBC) is proceeding with the policy review regarding the importation of hazardous waste from other Canadian jurisdictions for treatment at the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre near Swan Hills. This review, requested by the Alberta Government through an Order-in-Council in November 1993, fulfills the promise made to Albertans that full public consultation would be held before any change in policy is made regarding hazardous waste importation.

A draft application in support of the change of policy was submitted to the NRBC by Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd. (CSAL), the operators of the Alberta Special Waste Management System (ASWMS). Following the draft application, a program of public consultation was implemented to provide Albertans with information about the proposed project, to address and answer questions and to determine issues and concerns so that they may be addressed in the final application.

The public consultation process included a number of different components:

- a 12-page booklet was produced outlining how the ASWMS operates and examining changes the

operator must consider if wastes are accepted from other provinces. Information was included on transportation safety, truck traffic and routes and hazardous waste shipments in Alberta. This booklet was distributed to 4300 Albertans currently on the mailing list for *In Our Backyard*. Further copies are available from Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd. at (403) 235-8300.

- Open Houses were held in nine communities: Swan Hills, Barrhead, Whitecourt, Grande Prairie, Hinton, Nisku, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat and Calgary. Resource staff from CSAL and the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre and a transportation specialist were available at the Open Houses to answer questions.
- Extensive advertising of the Open Houses was carried out in provincial weekly and daily newspapers, native publications and on community radio stations.
- Public input was recorded at all the Open Houses and has been incorporated into the final application to the NRBC.
- A number of stakeholder groups were also included in the public consultation process, such as the Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison

Committee, the Town of Swan Hills, the Nisku Liaison Committee and the Environmental Coalition. This latter group comprises representatives from a number of Alberta environmental organizations, including the Environmental Resources Centre, Toxics Watch Society of Alberta, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Technology, Pembina Agricultural Protection Association, Fort Assiniboine District Environmental Action Association and the Green Alternatives Institute of Alberta.

Many of the concerns raised during the public consultation process were of a general nature relating to hazardous waste management, operations at the Treatment Centre, and environmental monitoring. Questions specifically related to the proposed change in policy focused on transportation risk and emergency response capability. A number of Albertans supported the change; one commented that the project "is an excellent idea, with no arguments against allowing toxic waste to be incinerated at Swan Hills". A total of 30 questionnaires were completed during the public consultation process.

*continued on next page . . .*

**Produced quarterly by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, "In Our Backyard" is intended to keep Albertans updated on issues and solutions in hazardous waste management. You can contribute to the process by "recycling" this newsletter. Pass it on to a friend with your comments. Should you have any suggestions you wish to share, pass them on to us. Our address, phone and fax number are on page 4.**



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Following the NRCB review of the final application, public hearings will be scheduled for some time in the late spring. The hearings are expected to take place in Swan Hills, with an opportunity being provided in Edmonton and Calgary for the submission of briefs. ♦

## Sydney Tar Ponds

Early in 1993 the Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison Committee was contacted by the Sydney Tar Ponds Clean-Up Inc., a Nova Scotia provincial Crown corporation responsible for the clean-up of Sydney Harbour.

The project, which was begun in 1987, is described as one of the largest and most complex toxic waste clean-ups in Canadian history, and the estimated completion date is 1997.

The Sydney Tar Ponds are the direct result of steel production in Sydney harbour. Coke, which is used in the smelting furnaces, remains after the liquid steel runs off. Over a period of years, untreated effluent from the process flowed into Sydney harbour, forming a sludge on the ocean floor.

When the corporation became aware of the Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison Committee, they requested information on the committee's Terms of Reference and the relationship between the operators of the Treatment Centre, the community and the Liaison Committee.

Subsequently, in the summer of 1993 Doug Leavitt, the Chairman of the Liaison Committee, while vacationing in Nova Scotia, was invited to visit the site. He felt that the experience was extremely interesting, and was pleased to be able to end his three-year term on the Committee on such a positive note. ♦



*Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison Committee: back row (left to right): Randy Marriott, Norm Bachand, Ralf Lemire, Jack Jackson; front row (left to right): Monica Etherington, Jenny Kilpatrick, Michelle Evert.*

## Liaison Committees provide community input

Liaison Committees in Swan Hills and Nisku, established in 1985 and 1989 respectively, provide an opportunity for community representatives to discuss local issues regarding the Alberta Special Waste Management System. Regular meetings are held to exchange information between the operator of the Treatment Centre, Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd., the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation and the community.

*The Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison Committee* has six regular members who serve three-year terms, and one auxiliary member, a high school student, who serves for the school year. Present members are Ralf Lemire (Chairman), Jenny Kilpatrick (Vice-Chairman), Monica Etherington (Secretary), Jack Jackson, Norman Bachand, Randy Marriott, Michelle Evert (auxiliary member).

*The Nisku Liaison Committee* comprises seven members who represent a number of organizations in the vicinity of the Nisku Transfer Station, among them the Leduc Environmental Action Foundation, Leduc Environmental Advisory Board (reporting to Leduc City Council) and Leduc County. The

members, who are appointed for terms of either two or three years, are Vic Sigurdson (Chairman), Bruce Sinclair, Greg Krischke, Mike McRae, Lana Dakin, Bob Caine and Doug Low. ♦

## Oil Recovery Alberta update

Over the last two and a half years United Farmers of Alberta, through Oil Recovery Alberta, collected over 2.9 million litres of used oil and 500,000 plastic oil containers.

As government funding for the program has ended, and as there is a limited market for the used containers, effective September 1, 1993 UFA began accepting used oil and containers only from their own customers. In this way, UFA, which is still committed to Oil Recovery Alberta, can continue to offer their customers a safe method of disposal. ♦

### Some oil facts

- 1 litre can produce a two-acre oil slick
- 1 litre can make 1,000,000 litres of water too foul to drink
- 35 ppm of oil kills fish
- 50 ppm of oil will shut down a water treatment plant

## **Toxic Wastes - "Toxilla"**

In early 1993 Alberta Education approached ACCESS Network to produce a series of 15-minute videos for use in high schools and distance education. The programs are to support the new Alberta Senior High School Science Curriculum which emphasizes the relationship between science, technology and society.

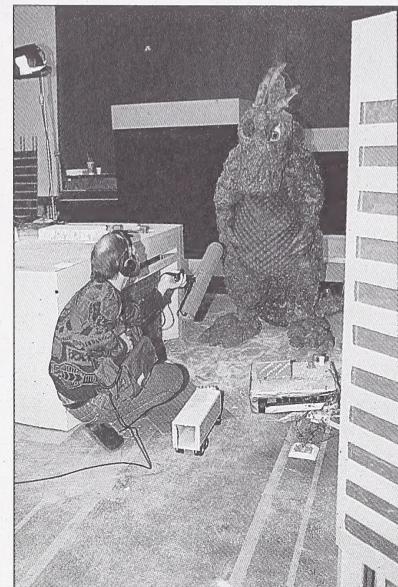
Last summer production began on "Toxilla", a video about toxic wastes. The purpose of this program, aimed at senior high school students, is to show how science and technology, which are responsible for many of the environmental problems we are now facing, can ironically also help to solve them.

To make this weighty topic palatable to students ages 15 to 19, the

writer/director decided to take an ironic approach in the script, which is a take-off on the now classic Godzilla films of the 1960s, which people of all ages can identify with.

Filming took place in ACCESS studios, as well as at the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre near Swan Hills, Celanese Canada Inc., Rice Howard Way in downtown Edmonton and the city's waste treatment facility.

For educational institutions and non-profit organizations, the cost of the videotape is minimal. For information on obtaining "Toxic Wastes -Toxilla", contact the Media Resource Centre at ACCESS Network (440-7777). The video will be available for the fall 1994 school year. ♦



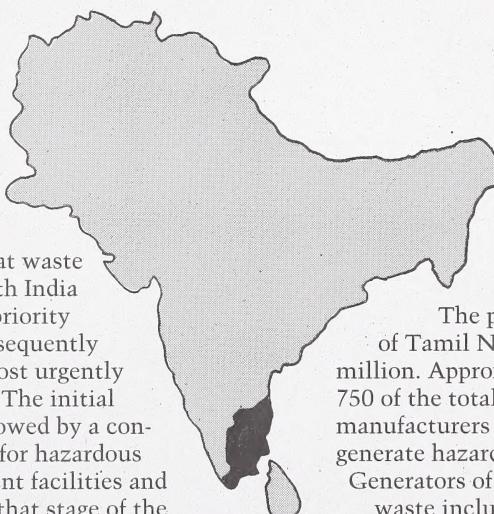
**On the set with "Toxilla"**

## *International* **Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation in India**

From September to November, 1993, Jay Nagendran of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation was involved as a consultant in a technical assistance program in India. The consulting team had a truly international composition - the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation and Stanley Associates Engineering Ltd., International Division (Canada), Mott MacDonald (England) and M. N. Dastur (India).

The "Tamil Nadu Environmental Monitoring and Pollution Control" study, funded by the Asian Development Bank, began in June 1993 and will be completed in April 1994. The project consists of several components: hazardous waste management, industrial waste water management, air pollution management and institutional structure.

Mr. Nagendran's role was to look at waste generated in South India to identify high priority areas, and to subsequently select the two most urgently requiring action. The initial analysis was followed by a conceptual proposal for hazardous waste management facilities and cost analysis for that stage of the project. At the present time, no such facilities exist in Tamil Nadu or anywhere else in India, but the state government is committed to pursuing implementation of a waste management system.



The population of Tamil Nadu is 60 million. Approximately 750 of the total of 15,000 manufacturers in the state generate hazardous waste. Generators of hazardous waste include the petrochemical and refining industries, pharmaceuticals, electroplating, textiles and leather tanning. ♦



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## Alternatives

### *When you buy that next cup of coffee . . .*

you may be getting even less than you paid for - less environmental pollution. Dow Plastics, a business group of Dow Chemical, has been awarded patents for a technology that uses only CO<sub>2</sub> as a blowing agent in the production of polystyrene packaging foam.

While CFCs had been replaced by HCFCs (which have somewhat less impact on the atmosphere), even the use of HCFCs is to be phased out in food service styrofoam.

To date, six companies, under agreement with Dow, are converting to the CO<sub>2</sub> blowing agent -

three in the USA, two in Europe and one in Canada - and discussions are under way globally. A Dow Plastics representative estimates that more than three million pounds of HCFCs per year will no longer go into the atmosphere when even just these six manufacturers convert all production to CO<sub>2</sub>. A side benefit is that the process does not require the production of new CO<sub>2</sub>, but rather uses CO<sub>2</sub> which is a by-product of a number of processes, such as ammonia production, fermentation, the refining of petroleum products, and natural sources such as natural gas and CO<sub>2</sub> wells.

*Please help us keep our mailing list up-to-date and eliminate duplicate mailings. The simplest way to do this is to send us your address change and the mailing label from your copy of In Our Backyard, or call us at 1-800-272-8873 and give us the change over the phone, along with the mailing code number found in the upper corner of your label.*

To end on another positive note - in a recent report the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that CFC levels in the atmosphere have actually declined since the legislation ordered the use of substitutes in the manufacture of plastic foam. ♦

## Call direct

◆ For information on hazardous waste management programs in Alberta

- Toxic Round Ups
- Community Study Groups

• Waste Minimization  
**Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation**

1-800-272-8873  
422-5029 (Edmonton)  
428-9627 (fax)

◆ To report an environmental emergency or to register a complaint  
**Pollution Control Division/Alberta Environmental Protection**

1-800-222-6514

◆ For a directory of waste management companies in Alberta

**Environmental Services Association of Alberta**  
439-6363 (Edmonton)  
Hotline  
(for small businesses)  
1-800-661-WASTE (9278)

◆ For information on recycling newspapers, metals, plastics, clothing  
**Recycling Branch/ Alberta Environmental Protection**

427-5838 (Edmonton)  
297-9525/8255 (Calgary)

◆ To access the clearinghouse that puts potential users of waste materials in contact with waste producers  
**Alberta Waste Materials Exchange**

450-5408 (Edmonton)

◆ For information on the transportation of dangerous goods  
**Alberta Public Safety Services**

1-800-272-9600  
(24 hours)



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